

Amendments to the Claims:

Please cancel Claims 4 and 14 without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter presented therein. Please amend Claims 5, 6, and 15, and add new Claims 16-23, as follows. This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

1. – 4. (Cancelled)

5. (Currently Amended) A method in accordance with ~~claim 4~~ claim 16, wherein the digital image is a binary image.

6. (Currently Amended) A method in accordance with ~~claim 4~~ claim 16, wherein the digital image is a multi-bit image.

7. – 14. (Cancelled)

15. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of ~~claim 14~~ claim 20, further comprising a writer interface which receives the ~~digital pixel toner consumption~~ values and facilitates exposure of a latent image on an exposure medium.

16. (New) A method of estimating toner consumption of a digital image when printed, the digital image comprising a plurality of pixels, and the method comprising the steps of:

determining a pixel type from a plurality of pixel types for each of the plurality of the pixels, wherein the plurality of pixel types includes a background pixel, an interior pixel, a first type of edge pixel, and a second type of edge pixel;

assigning a toner consumption value to each of the plurality of pixels based at least upon each pixel's determined pixel type;

adding at least the toner consumption values of each of the plurality of pixels to arrive at a sum; and

estimating toner usage based at least upon the sum.

17. (New) A method in accordance with claim 16, wherein the first type of edge pixel is a one-pixel-width line, and the second type of edge pixel is a two-pixel-width line.

18. (New) A method in accordance with claim 16, wherein the plurality of pixel types further include a third type of edge pixel.

19. (New) A method in accordance with claim 18, wherein the first type of edge pixel is a one-pixel-width line, the second type of edge pixel is a two-pixel-width line, and the third type of edge pixel is an edge pixel other than a one-pixel-width line and other than a two-pixel-width line.

20. (New) An apparatus for printing an image, the apparatus comprising:

a raster image processor for converting the image into a digital bitmap comprised of a plurality of pixels;

a rendering circuit for receiving the digital bitmap from the raster image processor for:

determining a pixel type from a plurality of pixel types for each of the plurality of the pixels, wherein the plurality of pixel types includes a background pixel, an interior pixel, a first type of edge pixel, and a second type of edge pixel;

assigning a toner consumption value to each of the plurality of pixels based at least upon each pixel's determined pixel type;

adding at least the toner consumption values of each of the plurality of pixels to arrive at a sum; and

estimating toner usage based at least upon the sum.

21. (New) The apparatus of claim 20, wherein the first type of edge pixel is a one-pixel-width line, and the second type of edge pixel is a two-pixel-width line.

22. (New) The apparatus of claim 20, wherein the plurality of pixel types further include a third type of edge pixel.

23. (New) The apparatus of claim 22, wherein the first type of edge pixel is a one-pixel-width line, the second type of edge pixel is a two-pixel-width line, and the third type of edge pixel is an edge pixel other than a one-pixel-width line and other than a two-pixel-width line.